SECTION 4 - EMERGENCY REPORTING

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Synopsis

NOTE: This section has been developed to ensure that, in the case of a hazardous chemical release, all necessary reports, both internal and external are completed and filed, all required contacts and notifications are made and the appropriate actions taken.

The section applies to all NWS facilities and work sites.

Initial Implementation Requirements:

- Appoint an Emergency Coordinator
- Compare Site/Facility Operations with the Requirements of this Section
  - Determine the reportable quantity for each hazardous substance and extremely hazardous substance (EHS) used or stored by the facility or work site (4.5.2)
  - Prepare a list of who needs to be notified in the event of a release of a hazardous substance, EHS, or petroleum product. This list should include the name of the agency, the telephone number and what information will be required (4.7)
  - Ensure Emergency Coordinator(s) understand who they are to contact about a release (4.7)

Recurring and Annual Task Requirements:

- Annually Review Inventory of Hazardous Materials, Substances and EHS Used or Stored at the Facility (4.5.1)

	Emergency Reporting Checklist	YES	NO	N/A
1.	Has an inventory of each hazardous substance (as listed in 40 CFR 302.4) and EHS (as listed in 40 CFR 355) that is used or stored by the facility or work site been prepared? (4.5.2)	—	—	—
2.	Does the inventory indicate which hazardous substances and EHS are stored in a quantity which exceeds the reportable quantity? (4.5.2)	—	—	—
3.	Has a list describing who is to be notified in the event of a release of a hazardous substance, EHS or petroleum product and the order for notification been prepared? (4.7)	—	—	—
4.	Have the Emergency Coordinators identified in the facility or work site Occupant Emergency Plan been trained to ensure they understand who they are to contact in the event of a release and what information will be required? (4.7)	—	—	—

SECTION 4 EMERGENCY REPORTING

4.1 Purpose and Scope

When a hazardous chemical is released into the environment, a series of required reports, both internal and external, will need to be prepared by the National Weather Service (NWS). This section has been developed to ensure NWS facilities and work sites generate the appropriate reports in a timely manner. This section applies to all NWS facilities and work sites.

4.2 Definitions

Environment — The navigable waters, the waters of the contiguous zone and the ocean waters of which the natural resources are under the exclusive management authority of the United States under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, and any other surface water, groundwater, drinking water supply, land surface or subsurface strata or ambient air within the United States or under the jurisdiction of the United States.

Note, that although the EPA does not include "wetlands" in the definition of the "environment" in 40 CFR 302.3, EPA does include "wetlands" in the definition of the "waters of the United States" in 40 CFR 230.3(s). Hence, any NWS facility or site that could impact a wetland needs to be aware of this and plan accordingly.

Facility — Any building, structure, installation, equipment, pipe or pipeline (including any pipe into a sewer or publicly-owned treatment works), well, pit, pond, lagoon, impoundment, ditch, landfill, storage container, motor vehicle, rolling stock or aircraft or any site or area where a hazardous substance has been deposited, stored, disposed of or placed, or otherwise come to be located; but does not include any consumer product in consumer use or any vessel.

Hazardous Substance — Any substance designated pursuant to 40 CFR Part 302.

Operating Unit — Includes the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), National Data Buoy Center (NDBC), NWS Training Center (NWSTC), National Reconditioning Center (NRC), National Logistics Support Center (NLSC), Radar Operations Center (ROC) or the Sterling Field Support Center (SFSC).

Reportable Quantity (RQ) — The amount of a hazardous substance as set forth in 40 CFR 302.4, which when released into the environment within any 24-hour period, requires an immediate notification of the National Response Center

AND/OR -

The amount of EHS as established in 40 CFR 355 which when released offsite, requires an immediate notification of the Community Emergency

	Coordinator for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and State Emergency Regulatory Commission (SERC). See Appendix B for the list of RQ for chemicals covered under 40 CFR 302.4 and 40 CFR 355.
Station Manager	For the purpose of this procedure, the Station Manager shall be either the NWS Regional Director; NCEP Director; Directors of Centers under NCEP (Aviation Weather Center, NP6; Storm Prediction Center, NP7; Tropical Prediction Center, NP8, and Space Weather Prediction Center, NP9); Directors of the NDBC, NWSTC, and Chiefs of NRC, ROC and SFSC facilities; or Meteorologist in Charge (MIC), Hydrologist in Charge (HIC), or Official in Charge (OIC).
Threshold Planning Quantity (TPQ)	The amount of EPA-defined EHS (in 40 CFR 355) that requires notification of the Local Emergency Planning Committee.
Waters of the United States	Includes navigable waters; tributaries of navigable waters, interstate waters, the oceans out to 200-miles, intrastate lakes, rivers and streams which are used by interstate travelers for recreation and other purposes, sources of fish or shellfish sold in interstate commerce and utilized for industrial purposes by agencies engaged in interstate commerce and wetlands.

4.3 Acronyms Employed in This Section

BMP	Best Management Practice
EHS	Extremely Hazardous Substance
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
HS	Hazardous Substance
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
SECO	NOAA Safety and Environmental Compliance Office
NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
NWS	National Weather Service
NWSH	National Weather Service Headquarters
RQ	Reportable Quantity
SERC	State Emergency Response Commission
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
TPQ	Threshold Planning Quantity

4.4 Regulatory Requirements

4.4.1 Federal

a. *Clean Water Act* - The Clean Water Act empowered the EPA to protect the "waters of the United States." As a result, the EPA has created a list of hazardous materials and assigned each a material "reportable quantity" or RQ. If a petroleum product or hazardous material is released (spilled) in a quantity that equals or exceeds the RQ within any 24-hour period, notification of the National Response Center will be provided in accordance with paragraph 4.6 of this section.

b. *Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act* - As a response to the release of a toxic gas in Bhopal, India, Congress enacted the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA). This law created four major programs:

1) *Emergency Planning* – requires the States and local governments to plan for chemical emergencies.

2) *Emergency Release* – requires notification to the National Response Center in the event of a release of an Extremely Hazardous Substance (EHS).

3) *Community Right-to-Know* - requires organizations that use or store hazardous substances or EHS file reports detailing the quantities of these materials on hand.

4) *Toxic Release Inventory* - requires operations that manufacture, process, or use more than 10,000 pounds on an annual basis of a toxic chemical listed in 40 CFR 372.65 to file an annual report detailing the amount of the material "released to the environment." The goal of the Toxics Release Inventory Program is to provide communities with information about toxic chemical releases and waste management activities and to support informed decision making at all levels by industry, government, non-governmental organizations, and the public.

Of these programs, NWS facilities or work sites may be required to comply with:

a) Emergency Planning as a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
b) Emergency Release notification if the facility stores or uses a regulated amount (i.e. more than the threshold planning quantity or TPQ) of an EHS
c) Community Right-to-Know, if the facility is required to file a Tier II Report (see Section 4.5.2).

4.4.2 State

Several states have enacted legislation that requires additional reporting requirements for releases. Contact the NWS Regional/Operating Unit Environmental/Safety Coordinator and/or NWSH Environmental and Safety staff to determine if additional state or local requirements exist.

4.4.3 NWS

As required by Procedure 5, Occupant Emergency Plan (OEP), of NWSM 50-1115, Occupational Safety and Health Manual, every NWS facility and work site must have a written

OEP to address employee response to all foreseeable emergencies, including response to releases of hazardous substances. For facilities and sites that store petroleum products, the SPCC Plan or SPCC Best Management Practices Plan must address the actions to be taken if petroleum materials are released.

4.5 Reportable Quantity

4.5.1 Hazardous Substance Release

Because even small spills or releases of hazardous materials can create serious risks to human health and the environment, the EPA has created a list of hazardous substances (HS) and assigned each an RQ. The values of the RQs range depending on the dangers presented by the released material. This list of hazardous substances is found in 40 CFR 302.4 and has been incorporated into Appendix B of this Manual.

If a quantity equal to or greater than the RQ of a hazardous substance listed in 40 CFR 302.4 is spilled or released "into the environment," the National Response Center (800-424-8802) must be notified of the start of the release immediately in accordance with paragraph 4.6 of this section.

Immediate is defined as after initial steps are taken to prevent further release, any emergency assistance (e.g., fire or rescue services) are called, and immediate first aid care is provided to injured employees.

NOTE:	The term "into the environment" refers to releases where the material enters the air, water or land. A spill of a liquid that is completely contained on an impermeable surface and has no emissions to the air is not a "release to the environment."

Some examples:

A release of a liquid with a low vapor pressure (like oil) into a containment area where almost all of the material is recovered - would not be reportable.

A release of a liquid with a high vapor pressure (like acetone) into a containment area where the reportable quantity "could" volatize into the environment before cleanup is accomplished - would be reportable.

Obviously, a release of a hazardous substance into an uncontained area would also be reportable.

If the amount of the release is unknown or cannot be determined within the 24-hour time limit, provide notification in accordance with paragraph 4.6 of this section. The penalties for not reporting are severe. A follow-up report can be made later if it is determined that the RQ was not released.

The designated RQ varies from one pound to 5,000 pounds depending on the material. For example,

- For mercury, the RQ is one pound.
- For parathion, the RQ is 10 pounds.
- For sulfuric acid, the RQ is 1,000 pounds.

NOTE:	Because they have different densities, one pound of mercury is only 1.13 fluid ounces (the specific gravity is 13.59) while 10-pounds of parathion is about 1 gallon (the specific gravity is about 1.20).

If a mixture containing one or more hazardous substances is released and the concentrations of the hazardous substances are unknown, a notification to the National Response Center must be made in accordance with paragraph 4.6 of this section if the total amount of the mixture released exceeds the reportable quantity of the hazardous substance with the lowest reportable quantity. For example, a spill of two pounds of a mixture containing an unknown concentration of Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) is reportable since it exceeds the PCB reportable quantity of one pound.

Although diesel or lubricating oils are not on the list of hazardous substances in Table 302.4, the EPA does require the reporting of oil spills. For oil spills, the National Response Center must be notified if the release or discharge may violate applicable water quality standards or may cause a film, sheen, or discoloration of the surface of the water, or the formation of sludge below the surface of the water. It is important to note that the oil does not have to actually contact the water to require a report to the National Response Center - it only has to be possible that it could contact water to trigger the reporting requirement. Normally, a spill of 42-gallons of oil in an uncontained area will necessitate a call to the National Response Center.

Several states have established reportable quantities for the release of petroleum products. Contact the NWS Regional/Operating Unit Environmental/Safety Coordinator and/or the NWSH Environmental and Safety staff for assistance in determining the existence and content of any State requirements.

4.5.2 Reportable Quantity

As a result of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the term "reportable quantity" can have another meaning. If the term "reportable quantity" is applied to the EHS identified in 40 CFR 355 (see Appendix B to this Manual), and the EHS is not listed as a hazardous substance (HS) in 40 CFR 302.4, the reportable quantity is the amount of the EHS that has been released off-site. This release requires a report be made to the LEPC (usually the fire department) and the State Emergency Regulatory Commission (SERC). Unfortunately, this change complicates the understanding of the term "reportable quantity" and thus the following examples are included here to help clarify this term.

a. If a chemical is only identified as a hazardous substance in 40 CFR 302.4, any release into the environmental equal to or greater than the reportable quantity must be reported to the National Response Center.

b. If a chemical is only identified as an EHS in 40 CFR 355 and is released into the environment and a quantity equal to or greater than the reportable quantity has gone off-site, the Community Emergency Coordinator for the LEPC must be notified.

c. If a chemical is on both lists as a hazardous substance (40 CFR 302.4) and an EHS (40 CFR 355) and it is released in an amount greater than the reportable quantity:

   - The National Response Center must be notified,

- The Community Emergency Coordinator must be notified only if it goes off-site.

While most NWS facilities or work sites do not handle or manage any of the materials on EHS list, some of the commercially available pesticides are listed. Therefore, a review of the EHS list must be made by the Environmental Focal Point or designated person to determine if any of these chemicals are used or stored by the facility or work site. A one pound spill of chlordane, for example, is reportable. The list of the EHS has also been incorporated into Appendix B of this Manual.

In order to facilitate the reporting of releases of hazardous substances and/or EHS, an inventory of hazardous substances and their reportable quantities should be prepared. See Attachment A to this section for examples of materials used by NWS facilities and work locations.

4.6 HS and EHS Release Reporting

When a hazardous material, petroleum product or EHS is released in an amount that either equals or exceeds the RQ or "reasonably might be expected to exceed the RQ," a number of notifications will be required. These notifications are usually made in the following order:

a. Local responder (Usually a "911" call) if there is a release off site, fire or medical emergency

b. LEPC and SERC (in most communities, the 911 call is transferred to LEPC)

c. Spill Contractor (usually designated in the SPCC or SPCC BMP Plan)

d. Station Manager will call the National Response Center (800-424-8802), if required (per instructions in SPCC or SPCC BMP plan)

e. NOAA Safety and Environmental Compliance (SECO) at 301-713-2870

f. NWS Regional/Operating Unit Environmental/Safety Coordinator

g. NWS HQ Environmental and Safety Office at 301-427-9763.

4.7 Posting of Phone Numbers

To ensure all the required contacts and notifications are made, the designated person or Environmental Focal Point will prepare a list of those who need to be notified and in what order along with the appropriate telephone numbers. The Station Manager will be provided with a copy of the list that will then be posted in a readily accessible place. The facility/work site Emergency Coordinator(s) identified in the facility/work site Occupant Emergency Plan must then be informed of the existence of this list as well as when and how it is to be used in the event of a release. For further guidance, consult Procedure 5, Occupant Emergency Plan, of NWSM 50-1115, Occupational Safety & Health Manual.

4.8 Responsibilities

4.8.1 NWS Headquarters (NWSH)

a. The NWSH Environmental/Safety Office will provide assistance to Operating Unit, and field personnel to ensure that NWS facilities comply with requirements of this section.

b. NWSH will coordinate with SECO, as necessary, regarding compliance issues related to this section.

4.8.2 Regional or Operating Unit Environmental/Safety Coordinator

a. Will monitor and coordinate to promote compliance with the requirements of this section for the Regional Headquarters and field offices or operating units.

b. Will ensure that applicable procedures are implemented at Regional Headquarters or operating unit facilities to comply with requirements of this section.

4.8.3 Station Manager

a. Will have oversight over the implementation of this section and ensure that the requirements of this section are followed by individuals at the NWS facility.

b. Will ensure that sufficient personnel and funding are available to enable compliance with all applicable requirements of this section.

c. Will ensure that procedures are implemented at NWS field offices for reporting of releases of "Hazardous Substances" and "Extremely Hazardous Substances" from the facility.

d. Will ensure the NWS is represented at meetings of the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

e. Will review or delegate review of this section on an annual basis to ensure that the facility is complying with its requirements. Confirmation of this review will be forwarded to the Regional or Operating Unit Environmental/Safety Coordinator.

4.8.4 Environmental or Environmental/Safety Focal Point or Designated Person

Will ensure that any tasks delegated to them by the Station Manager are implemented in accordance with the requirements of this section.

4.8.5 Employees

a. Individual employees affected by this section are required to read, understand, and comply with the requirements of this section.

b. Report all violations of the requirements of this section to their supervisor or Environmental Focal Point.

4.9 References

Incorporated References

The following list of references is incorporated as a whole or in part into this section. These references can provide additional explanation or guidance for the implementation of this section.

4.9.1 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

40 CFR	302.4	*Designation of Hazardous Substances*
	355 Appendix A	*The List of EHSs and Their Threshold Planning Quantities*

ATTACHMENT A Examples of Hazardous Substances Potentially Found at NWS Sites

Hazardous Substances	302.4 RQ (lbs)	355 RQ (lbs)	355 TPQ (lbs)
Acetone		5000	
Ammonia	100	100	500
Ethylene glycol	5000		
Dichloromethane (Methylene Chloride)	1000		
Mercury	1		
Methanol	5000		
Methyl ethyl ketone (MEK)	5000		
Methyl ethyl ketone peroxide	10		
Polychlorinated biphenyls	1		
Sulfuric acid (batteries)	1000	1000	1000
Potassium hydroxide	1000		
Lead	10		
Asbestos (friable)	1		
Xylene	100		
Toluene	1000		